

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

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VOL. I.      JANUARY & FEBRUARY, 1840.      No. 10.

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*Stated Meeting, January 3.*

Present, twenty-seven members.

Mr. DU PONCEAU, President, in the Chair.

The Judges and Clerks of the Election, held this day, reported the appointment of the following officers:—

*President.*

Peter S. Du Ponceau, LL. D.

*Vice Presidents.*

Nathaniel Chapman, M. D.,  
Joseph Hopkinson, LL. D.,  
Robert M. Patterson, M. D.

*Secretaries.*

Franklin Bache, M. D.,  
John K. Kane,  
Alexander D. Bache, LL. D.,  
Robley Dunglison, M. D.

*Counsellors for Three Years.*

Nicholas Biddle,  
Thomas Biddle,  
Gouverneur Emerson,  
J. Francis Fisher.

*Curators.*

John P. Wetherill,  
Isaac Hays, M. D.,  
Franklin Peale.

*Treasurer.*

John Vaughan.

The following donations were received:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

Gradmessung in Ostpreussen und ihre Verbindung mit Preussischen und Russischen Dreiecksketten; ausgeführt von F. W. Bessel, Director der Königsberger Sternwarte u. s. w.—*From the Author.*

Address at the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, Nov. 11, 1839. By R. R. Gurley. Philadelphia, 1839. *From Mr. Elliot Cresson.*

FOR THE CABINET.

A Donation of Mastodon Bones, procured by a subscription of members of the Society;—the head perfect.

Drs. Horner and Hays were appointed a Committee to report a description of the same.

Mr. Henry Seybert, at the time in Paris, transmitted to the Society a specimen of the Daguerriotype.

Mr. Du Ponceau made a verbal communication respecting the publication of the Cochin Chinese Dictionary of the late Bishop of Adran, and also of a Latin and Cochin Chinese Dictionary by the Bishop of Isauropolis, and announced that the Grammar of the Berber language, by M. Venture, was about to be published.

Dr. Hare produced a remarkably beautiful specimen of potassium, in the globular form, assumed by falling into naphtha.

This specimen was a part of the product of one process which yielded him six ounces, two hundred and sixty-three grains, avoirdupois.

The process, and the apparatus by which this large amount of potassium was procured, had been described in the last volume of the Society's Transactions.

The quantity of materials employed, was 8 lbs. cream of tartar, reduced to 47 oz., by carbonization; and 3 oz. of coarsely powdered charcoal, from which the finer part had been sifted.

Notwithstanding the employment of a tube of two inches in diameter, it became choked with the potassium, carbon, and other volatile products, which were sublimed; and in the effort to open a passage, a steel rod, employed for this purpose, became so firmly fastened as to render its extrication impracticable by the force of two men.

In the effort to withdraw it, the tube was detached from the bottle. As the rod had been rendered smooth and cylindrical by the wire-drawing process, it could not have been thus held, upon any other view than that of its being soldered to the potassium.

The iron casing, used to protect the bottle, had been exposed to the fire during three processes; yet, excepting at the lower corner, it did not appear to be injured. With slight emendation, and with the protection of a stout disk of malleable iron, situate so as to form a basis, Dr. Hare had no doubt it might be used for several more operations.

In distilling the potassium from the tube, "per descensum," as described in his account of the process already referred to, the cap converging to a tapering tube was screwed on to that end of the receiver which was nearest the bottle; and, of course, this end was the lowermost in the distillatory process. This arrangement was preferable, as it prevented the loose deposition always found at the end of the tube farthest from the fire, from falling into the naphtha employed together with the potassium.

Dr. Hare hoped to lay before the Society a drawing of his apparatus, under the impression that it would be deemed worthy of being published among the Transactions of the Society.

The purchase of the Reports on Prisons, printed by order of the House of Commons of Great Britain, was directed by the Society.

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*Stated Meeting, January 17.*

Present, thirty-three members.

MR. DU PONCEAU, President, in the Chair.

The following donations were received.

FOR THE LIBRARY.

A History of the Heathen Mythology; or the Fables of the Ancients, elucidated from Historical Records, an Important Key to the Classics. To which is added, an Inquiry into the Religion of the first Inhabitants of Great Britain, and a particular Account of the